



Quarterly meeting of the Water, Wastewater and Solid Waste Action Coordinating Team

Date: Meeting on Oct 14, 2025, 10 am to 12 pm

Location: Dept. of Natural Resources & Conservation, 1539 11th Ave, Helena, Montana
First Floor Montana Conference Room and Zoom

Call to Order: W2ASACT Chair Anna Miller called the meeting to order AT 10:02.

Roll Call: Anna asked those present to introduce themselves.

In the room:

Anna Miller, DNRC
Ben Rigby, MRWS

Denise Cook, DNRC
Josh Rickman, DNRC

Nicole Hallsten, DNRC

Via Zoom:

1	Abby Ritz	16	Krista Lammers
2	Abby Weimer	17	Kristen Jordan
3	Anna Miller and Denise Cook at DNRC	18	Kitty Schmid
4	Autumn Coleman	19	Lance Goodman
5	Becky Anseth Dept of Commerce	20	Maureen Connor
6	Bobbie DuBose	21	Melissa Downing, DNRC
7	Casey Lewis	22	Michelle McNamee, DNRC
8	Craig Erickson	23	Mike Abrahamson - DEQ
9	Coleen O'Rourke, DNRC	24	Nikki Rogers
10	Galen Steffens, Commerce	25	Samantha Treu
11	Heidi Fleury-WMCC (Heidi Fleury)	26	Sandie Koenig
12	Julie Hoffbauer, M-M	27	Shawna Swanz, ARPA
13	Kassandra A Quint	28	Stephanie Crider-Pridemore
14	Katherine Certalic	29	Will Meyer MAP
15	Ki-Ai McBride	30	Zen Parry, Ronan

Approval of Minutes: The minutes from July 8, 2025, meeting, which were previously posted on the website and distributed to those in the room, were adopted with no revisions.

Topic of Discussion: ARPA Project claims and closeout – ARPA Team

Shawna Swanz with the ARPA Team began a PowerPoint presentation. She covered projects that are in good standing, those being watched and those missing key elements. December 31, 2025, is the deadline for projects. Project sponsors have 90 days after the deadline to complete their final claims, including final reports and any closing documents. Shawna noted the link at the bottom of the slides, arpa-mtdnrc.hub.arcgis.com/pages/grant-management, where more information can be found.

Shawna covered some statistics including completed and active grants, total grant awards and total amount in awards and amount reimbursed and amount remaining. Using the link in the presentation, Shawna showed how to find the ARPA Grant Status as well as the ARPA Staff member assigned to that project. She encouraged those with questions not to wait, but to reach out to the team to have your questions answered. Shawna reminded those with ARPA grants that Third Quarter progress reports are due October 15, 2025. Reach out to your grant manager to be considered for an extension.

Open Issues: Anna noted that the Federal Government is still shutdown. We have not heard from USDA-RD. We will provide interim financing for payments needed to pay contractors. Agencies will work with RD once the shutdown has ended.

New Business:

Program Updates:

Montana Department of Commerce

Becky Anseth said Commerce has planning grants. The CDBG application date is November 10, 2025. Becky added contact information in the chat for Tara Green at Commerce (tara.green2@mt.gov).

Galen Steffens announced that Ann Swend is our program manager with the Community Technical Assistance Program (CTAP). And they have hired a new planner, Jacob Cody who will be in Gus Byrum's role, so big shoes to fill. Jacob is doing great and already traveled to Eastern Montana. Our CTAP consultants work with the planning staff to provide assistance to communities and are also working on some regulation projects. Galen put their application cycle deadlines in the meeting chat.

RRGL Program

Katherine Certalic reported that the program received more planning grant applications than anticipated. She said they are also updating the administrative rules.

RDG (RIT) Program

Samantha Treu said that she is working with Cooke City on project funding. She said that their planning grant cycle closes tomorrow.

Montana Rural Water Systems

Ben Rigby announced that the Montana Rural Water Conference is moving to the Billings Convention Center. The conference dates are March 23, 24 and 25, Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday. With the new conference location, there will still be the same kinds of sessions, including the funding workshop that Autumn Coleman coordinates.

Ben said abstracts close the end of this week or on October 21, 2025. They are working on making sure everyone's ERPs are done. RD funding is not available so he has not been able to coordinate with them.

State Revolving Fund Program

Wastewater Program: Mike Abrahamson is working on the annual report. The Council on Infrastructure Financing Authorities (CIFA) conference is next week. This is where the SRF programs from around the country gather and discuss program strategies. The EPA may not be there.

Mike announced that Michele Marsh retired after 15 years with SRF. Michele's replacement starts mid-November. We are looking forward to being fully staffed again. We also hired a new technical advisor to compliment Josh Weil, who has been doing that for the past 5 years for us. They are down at fall school this week, providing operator training. Hopefully you will get to know Eric Olson soon.

Drinking Water Program: Sandie Koenig is working on the WRF annual report to report on things that occurred in State Fiscal Year 2025. Drinking Water SRF record year of loan closed dollars at \$55.8 million, and 32 agreements. Some communities had more than one loan.

We were able to hire Becca Beam who is out of our Missoula office. Mark Golz has come back to the program out of retirement, so we are thrilled to have Mark and his wealth of experience.

Anna Miller added that the State of Montana has just been awarded it 2025 federal grant from the EPA before the government shut down. We still have one more grant from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law money coming, however, with EPA Federal shutdown, things are on hold.

Anna reminded all that on the allocation of principal forgiveness won't be done until we do our next intended use plan in 2026. We don't know what those dollar amounts will be, so don't assume a certain amount based on what you did last time you applied. Make sure you talk with Mike or Sandie to find out what's going on with principal forgiveness.

Regional Water Program, DNRC

Anna Miller let all know that after a tough battle with cancer, Rick Duncan passed away in September. His loss will be felt across the state as he was instrumental in helping many communities receive adequate and safe drinking water.

Shawna Swanz of the ARPA Team has been helping us with Regional Water and will be working on both programs, ARPA and Regional Water.

Shawna said we have administrative grants that are part of the rural water systems grant program and those agreements and award letters will go out next week and we are currently accepting project grant applications. She was not able to spend as much time as she wanted with Rick and he was always willing to share project progress in great detail. Shawna has some learning and catching up to do but she is available to help the water systems with their grant reimbursements and we'll get through it. She is looking forward to working with the regional water systems going forward.

Ben Rigby added that Mandi Nay, the manager at Dry Redwater will be stepping down the end of October but she is still on the Montana Rural Water Board.

WMCC

Casey Lewis said they are seeing grants go out to help wastewater systems. Heidi Fleury reported that WMCC has funding available for wastewater and stormwater community programs. Heidi put the WMCC website in the chat. She said there is a cap of \$50,000 and these projects are mainly community education programs on septic leachate issues as well as stormwater, green stormwater infrastructure. They have a little funding leftover.

Heidi added that WMCC was awarded a grant from the EPA and the Columbia River Basin's Toxic Reduction Funds. That funding gave us about \$3.2 million in subaward grants that we can give out. We have awarded 14 projects, 10 of which are wastewater and septic-related projects, and 4 are stormwater. We are excited to have this funding and we are working on some larger projects for the resident-owned communities with many people in this meeting.

Heidi said WMCC has 3 resident-owned community projects near Evergreen in the Kalispell area and another, a septic tank replacement project. Many of the partners in this group worked on these with us, including Rick Duncan and Michelle Marsh. Projects include a septic system cost-share replacement for homeowners in Powell County. And we are going to partner with MAP to help with some system inspections. Heidi has heard people mention starting a program like this, so she shared that WMCC is working on a template for how we manage this homeowner septic replacement cost share. Staff have also worked on a toolkit information and Casey put a link in the chat. These are basic models for communities to do septic leachate outreach as well as stormwater maintenance cost share.

The Flathead Conservation District has a stormwater infrastructure program called the Flathead Rain Garden Initiative. You can tell WMCC is all about wastewater and stormwater projects and we service counties in Western Montana, west of the Continental Divide. Reach out with questions. Anna asked Heidi and Casey to put their contact info in the chat. Casey added that current applications will close November 20 at midnight.

Midwest Assistance Program

Lance Goodman reported that MAP has been forming some districts. These districts can access additional funding. They have also been doing a few income surveys for CDBG eligibility, developing the asset management plans. They have also been doing quite a few ERPs, either updates or creating new ones. Anna asked Lance to add contact info in the chat in case people have questions.

W2ASACT Workshops and Standard Documents

Autumn Coleman will be reaching out to the partners to plan for the March 2026 W2ASACT workshop at MRW conference. Autumn shared some updates to the W2ASACT website. We will also be updating the funders' booklet. Autumn showed where to find meeting info, the funders booklet and other info under technical assistance. Section 0900 of the application has been updated. This is the American Iron and Steel and the Buy American, Build America.

Autumn said they have a sub-work group that will clean up and edit the Uniform Application.

Anna asked if ARPA training sessions are still ongoing and Autumn said yes, they do a monthly webinar. Shawna added that the next one is set for December 16. Autumn said you can register for the series of webinars by using one link on the ARPA web page.

Anna reminded all of the funders' workshop, which will be Monday, March 23 from 8 to noon at the Montana Rural Water conference. It is free and you do not need to register – just show up.

Autumn announced that DNRC has sponsored in partnership with Montana Association of Conservation Districts and the Western Montana Conservation Commission, access to grant writing and grant administration trainings through Grant Writing USA. We will get a GovDelivery email out to everyone. These are free to our eligible entities, so cities, towns, counties, CD's, water and sewer districts and irrigation districts. To register, you may need to complete a quick questionnaire and then you'll get a link as it will most likely be online training.

Congressional Update

Anna said there is nothing to report with the federal government currently shut down.

Meeting link: [https://mt.gov.zoom.us/rec/share/7VjNFa0HZAdrmDqjoJ-](https://mt.gov.zoom.us/rec/share/7VjNFa0HZAdrmDqjoJ-CyGeuw_T4qXFTR0EvirhV4BWHYZYTv_uSdZZ5tQECWzX0.PKvr6kzNW4Agjora?startTime=1760457018000)

[CyGeuw_T4qXFTR0EvirhV4BWHYZYTv_uSdZZ5tQECWzX0.PKvr6kzNW4Agjora?startTime=1760457018000](https://mt.gov.zoom.us/rec/share/7VjNFa0HZAdrmDqjoJ-CyGeuw_T4qXFTR0EvirhV4BWHYZYTv_uSdZZ5tQECWzX0.PKvr6kzNW4Agjora?startTime=1760457018000)

Passcode: #+j4Y3E!

Adjournment at 11:02.

Next Meeting is tentatively scheduled for Tuesday January 13, 2026, in the first floor Montana Conference room at DNRC.

Acronyms:

AIS – American Iron & Steel
 APE – Advanced Pump & Equipment
 ARPA – American Rescue Plan Act of 2021
 ARRA – American Recovery & Reinvestment Act of 2009
 AWWA – American Water Works Association
 BABA – Build America, Buy American
 BIL – Bipartisan Infrastructure Law
 BOI – Montana Department of Commerce, Board of Investments
 CARDD – Conservation & Resource Development Division, DNRC
 CDBG – Community Development Block Grant Program, MT Department of Commerce
 CIFA – Council on Infrastructure Financing Authorities
 CMRWA – Central Montana Regional Water Authority
 COVID-19 – Corona Virus 2019
 DEQ – Montana Department of Environmental Quality
 DNRC – Montana Department of Natural Resources & Conservation
 GWE – Great West Engineering
 HDR – HDR Engineering
 HUD – Housing and Urban Development
 IAC – Infrastructure Advisory Commission (ARPA)
 IUP – Intended Use Plan
 KLJ – Kadmas Lee & Jackson Engineering
 LFD – Montana State Legislative Fiscal Division
 MAP – Midwest Assistance Program
 MEPA – Montana Environmental Policy Act
 MISC – Montana Invasive Species Council
 M-M – Morrison - Maierle
 MRWS – Montana Rural Water Systems
 MCEP – See TSEP Montana Coal Endowment Program (formerly Treasure State Endowment Pgm.)
 RATES – Rural & Tribal Environmental Solutions
 RDG – Reclamation Development Grant Program, DNRC
 RRGL – Renewable Resource Grant and Loan Program, DNRC
 SRF (DNRC) – Wastewater State Revolving Fund Loan Program
 SWEFC – Southwest Environmental Finance Center at the University of New Mexico
 TSEP – Treasure State Endowment Program, MT Department of Commerce – Now MCEP
 USDA - RD – United States Department of Agriculture – Rural Development
 WASACT – Water & Solid Waste Action Coordinating Team, Montana
 WMCC – Western Montana Conservation Commission
 WRF (DNRC) – Drinking Water State Revolving Fund Loan Program

14 October 2025